

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SUHARTO ADDRESSES NATION ON ELECTION

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENT SUHARTO, IN A JUNE 2 TELEVISED ADDRESS, SIGNALLED THE GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA'S (GOI) DETERMINATION TO WIND UP PUBLIC DEBATE OVER THE 1977 ELECTIONS. WHILE ADMITTING THAT EXCESSES HAD OCCURRED DURING THE CAMPAIGN, THE PRESIDENT DECLARED THE ELECTIONS A SUCCESS AND SAID THAT FURTHER DENIGRATION OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS WOULD DISTURB NATIONAL STABILITY AND SET BACK DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. SUHARTO'S SPEECH AND AN EARLIER MEETING WITH MOSLEM LEADERS SEEMED TO BE AIMED PRIMARILY AT MUTING DEVELOPMENT UNITY PARTY (PPP) CRITICISM OF THE GOI. INITIAL PPP REACTION INDICATES THAT THESE INTERVENTIONS HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT SUHARTO, IN A TELEVISED ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON MAY 2, MADE A STRONG APPEAL FOR POST-ELECTION NATIONAL UNITY WHILE CLEARLY SIGNALLING THE DETERMINATION OF THE GOI TO WIND UP ACrimonious DEBATE OVER THE CONDUCT OF THE 1977 ELECTIONS. CLAIMING THAT FURTHER ATTACKS ON THE HONESTY AND VALIDITY OF THE ELECTIONS WOULD "ONLY DISRUPT NATIONAL
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STABILITY AND THE PATH OF DEVELOPMENT," SUHARTO INTONED, "LET THERE BE NO ONE AMONG US WHO, EITHER CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, AGAIN DENIGRATES THE MEANING OF THE ELECTION."

3. SUHARTO DECLARED THAT DESPITE THE CARPING OF "A FEW CRITICS," THE ELECTIONS WERE A SUCCESS BY THE "ONE AND

ONLY" VALID STANDARD, THAT THEY WERE CONDUCTED IN FULL ACCORD WITH EXISTING LAW. CLAIMING THAT THE INDONESIAN PEOPLE "ALL AGREE THAT THE ELECTIN PROCEEDED WITH GUARANTEED FREEDOM AND SECRECY," SUHARTO SAID IT WAS "IMPOSSIBLE" THAT FORCE HAD BEEN USED TO AFFECT THE RESULT, SINCE SUCH AN ABUSE "WOULD HAVE BEEN IMMEDIATELY FOUND OUT AND PUBLICLY PROTESTED."

4. THE PRESIDENT DID CONCEDE THAT SOME "EXCESSES" HAD BEEN PERPETRATED BY "ALL THREE CONSTESTANTS." HE STRONGLY DENIED THAT THE GOI "WANTED TO COVER UP THESE SHORTCOMINGS," ON THE CONTRARY CLAIMING THAT THEY WERE BEING INVESTIGATED AND CORRECTED "AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE." THE PRESIDENT PERSONALLY EXPRESSED HIS "DEEP SYMPATHY TO FAMILY MEMBERS LEFT BEHIND BY THE UNFORTUNATE VICTIIMS FATALLY INJURED" AS A RESULT OF THESE EXCESSES.

5. THE PRESIDENT SPECIFICALLY PINPOINTED SVERAL GROUPS STILL TRYING TO UNDERMINE THE STATE, INCLUDING "REMNANTS OF THE PKI, THE SAWITO MOVEMENT AND THE KOMANDO JIHAD," BUT AT THE SAME TIME DENIED HE WAS TRYING TO BLAME ANY ONE "BLACK SHEEP" FOR EITHER ELECTION EXCESSES OR PUBLIC UNREST SINCE THE ELECECTION. SUCH "POINTING OF FINGERS AND MUTUAL SUSPICIOUS WOULD ONLY SERVE TO UNDERCUT THE GROWING MATURITY OF THE PEOPLE AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS."

6. DESPITE THE PRESIDENT'S "BLACK SHEEP" DISCLAIMER, HIS SPEECH WAS CLEARLY AIMED PRIMARILY AT MUTING FURTHER COMPLAINTS FROM THE OPPOSITION, MOSLEM-BASED PPP. THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRESIDENT SEVERAL TIMES REFERRED TO "SYSTEMATIC" OR "ORGANIZED" ATTACKS ON THE HONESTY AND VALIDTY OF THE ELECTION, AND SINGLED OUT FOR PARTICULAR CRITICISM "ACTS, COMMITTED BY SOME, WHICH INTERFERE WITH THE REPORTING OF ELECTION RESULTS," A POINTED JIBE AT THE PPP DECISION TO WITHDRAW ITS REPRESENTATIVES FROM LOCAL ELECTION BOARDS IN EAST JAVA AND TO REFUSE TO SIGN VOTE REPORTING FORMS IN CENTRAL JAVA. THE PRESIDENT, MOREOVER, MET PRIVATELY WITH FOUR PPP LEADERS TWO DAYS BEFORE HIS SPEECH AND REPORTEDLY DELIVERED MUCH THE SAME MESSAGE AS CONTAINED IN HIS ADDRESS.

7. THERE ARE SOME SIGNS THAT THE PPP IS HEEDING THE PRESIDENT'S VEILED WARNING. PUBLIC COMMENTS BY THE FOUR P
RTY LEADERS AFTER THEIR MEETING WITH SUHARTO WERE REMARKABLY MILD, STOPPING ONLY A LITTLE SHORT OF ENDORSING WHOLE CLOTH THE GOVERNMENT POSITION ON ELECTION ISSUES. A PPP REPRESENTATIVE IN PARLIAMENT, MOREOVER, ON THE MORNING OF THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, PRAISED THE CONDUCT OF THE

ELECTION IN LANGUAGE ALMOST PRECISELY MATCHING PARTS OF
THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS. WITH THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
OF ELECTION RESULTS ONLY FOUR DAYS AWAY, THE GOI SEEMS TO
BE TURNING THE ELECTION FROM AN ISSUE INTO A FACT.
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